



# U.S. House of Representatives Committee on the Judiciary F. James Sensenbrenner, Jr., Chairman

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## *News Advisory*

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## **Committee Overwhelmingly Approves Voting Rights Act Extension**

### *Bipartisan Legislation Clears by 33-1 Vote*

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The House Judiciary Committee today overwhelmingly approved a 25-year extension of the expiring provisions of the Voting Rights Act (VRA). The Committee cleared this bipartisan legislation, H.R. 9, by a 33-to-1 vote.

House Judiciary Committee Chairman F. James Sensenbrenner, Jr. (R-Wis.), who introduced H.R. 9, stated, “The Committee record shows that while the VRA has been successful, our work is not yet complete. Discrimination in the electoral process continues to exist and threatens to undermine the progress that has been made over the last forty years. By extending the VRA for an additional 25 years, H.R. 9 ensures that the voting rights of all Americans regardless of race or color will be protected.”

Judiciary Ranking Member John Conyers, Jr. (D-Mich.), an original cosponsor of H.R. 9, said, “The Voting Rights Act is one of the nation’s most important civil rights victories and memorializes those who marched, struggled, and even died to secure the right to vote for all Americans. While we must applaud the substantial progress which has been made in the area of voting rights, we must also continue our efforts to protect the rights of every American voter with the reauthorization and restoration of the expiring provision of the Act. I believe that the provisions of this legislation which restores the earlier standards interpreting Section 5 will ensure the continuing vitality of the Act.”

Congressional Black Caucus Chairman and original cosponsor Mel Watt (D-N.C.) stated, “Today's markup brings us one step closer to passing a bipartisan, bicameral bill that unites

us as a country by ensuring that *all* Americans play their part in our democracy on equal terms. I am pleased that the bill received such resounding support in the Judiciary Committee.”

Judiciary Constitution Subcommittee Chairman Steve Chabot (R-Ohio), also an original cosponsor of H.R.9, commented, “The right to vote is one of the most fundamental and essential rights we have as citizens. I’m pleased that the reauthorization of the Voting Rights Act, of which I am a lead cosponsor, has such overwhelming bipartisan support. My subcommittee held 12 hearings and heard from 48 witnesses on the reauthorization of this historic legislation. I will continue to work to see that the Voting Rights Act is passed by the full House and signed into law.”

“The Voting Rights Act has ensured that the promise of America, the right to full participation in our democracy, will be protected. The overwhelming support for renewing this landmark legislation in the Judiciary Committee, and in the Congress, demonstrates again that protecting the right to vote is a fundamental American value,” added original cosponsor and Judiciary Constitution Subcommittee Ranking Member Jerrold Nadler (D-N.Y.).

The Committee considered a number of amendments during the markup. An amendment offered by Rep. Steve King (R-Iowa) that would have eliminated bilingual assistance provided to citizens was defeated by a 26-to-9 margin with 11 Republicans joining all 15 Democrats in opposition.

H.R. 9, “The Fannie Lou Hamer, Rosa Parks, and Coretta Scott King Voting Rights Act Reauthorization and Amendments Act of 2006,” is expected on the House floor in the next two weeks.

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